

WORLD HUMANITARIAN DAY



19 August is the second World Humanitarian Day. In 2010 the Day will raise awareness of what it means to be a humanitarian aid worker by describing the work humanitarians do, explaining the principles all humanitarians are guided by, and portraying the hazards humanitarian workers face in the course of their work. The Day will also honour aid workers who have been killed or injured in the course of their work. The General Assembly, which established the Day in 2008, invites all countries, UN entities and international and non-governmental organisations to observe the day annually, providing an opportunity to increase public support for humanitarian work worldwide.

Why 19 August?

Six years ago, on 19 August 2003, the United Nations Office in Iraq was bombed and 22 people lost their lives. Prior to that date, and since then, many other humanitarian workers have lost their lives. The most recent large scale loss occurred as a result of the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti. World Humanitarian Day has its origins in Iraq but in this, its second year, the aim is to make the day genuinely reflective of the global humanitarian community.

What is planned?

Publicity and information materials are being prepared and will be ready for dispatch and electronic download during the course of July. The materials will include the following:

- Key Messages on World Humanitarian Day.
- A one minute Public Service Announcement (PSA) high definition video film that can be broadcast in the lead up to the day.
- A longer version of the video film which will include a statement by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki Moon, which will be released for broadcast in early August 2010.
- The latest information on the safety and security of humanitarian relief workers.

What can you do?

We hope that these materials can be disseminated widely through the humanitarian community's information networks, and are relying upon humanitarian organisations, UN Member States, all UN Information Centres, news networks and other media to help us in ensuring that the broadcast and print materials have wide coverage around the globe.

We also hope that interesting organisations and groups will organize events in support of the Day, using or adapting the globally produced materials to highlight specific humanitarian issues that may be of particular interest locally.

Specific actions you can take:

- Ensure that colleagues and the general public are aware of World Humanitarian Day through dissemination of this leaflet, the one-minute film, and via professional and personal networks such as Facebook and Twitter.
- Use the Key Messages as points for senior political figures and officials to use in any media interviews or encounters organized specifically for the day.
- Lobby major international and national broadcast networks to show the version of the film that incorporates the Secretary-General's statement.
- Where possible, encourage humanitarian aid workers to speak to the media about their work.
- Organize public events featuring humanitarian work.

Contacts

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